

EUPHORBIA PLANT NAMED 'FIRST BLUSH'

GENUS: EUPHORBIA

5

SPECIES: *epithymoides*

DENOMINATION: FIRST BLUSH

10

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar of variegated cushion spurge, a hardy perennial that is grown for use as an ornamental shrub for the landscape.

15 The new invention is known botanically as *Euphorbia* and will be referred to hereinafter by the cultivar name 'First Blush'.

'First Blush' is a sport that was discovered by the inventor in 1996 in a cultivated area of Germantown, Wisconsin. 'First Blush' was discovered as a variegated branch on *Euphorbia epithymoides* among a production block grown from seed. 'First Blush' was 20 selected by the inventor based on its variegated foliage and variegated bracts. The foliage is pale green with cream-white margins. In spring the upper foliage nearest the sun is tinted rose-pink and then turns a more pronounced rose-red color in fall. Whorls of bracts are pale green with cream-white margins on stems that are often tinted red. 'First Blush' exhibits low vigor resulting in a less invasive plant than the species. The variegation 25 makes 'First Blush' a showier variety than other *Euphorbia*.

The first asexual reproduction of 'First Blush' was carried out in a cultivated area of Germantown, Wisconsin by the inventor. The method used was stem cuttings. Since that time subsequent generations have been determined stable and true to type.

30

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The following traits have been repeatedly observed and represent the distinguishing characteristics of the new *Euphorbia* cultivar 'First Blush'. These traits in combination distinguish 'First Blush' from all other existing varieties of *Euphorbia* known to the inventor. 'First Blush' has not been tested under all possible conditions and phenotypic differences may be observed with variations in environmental, climatic, and cultural conditions, however, without any variance in genotype.

1. *Euphorbia* 'First Blush' exhibits a compact, clumping habit.
2. *Euphorbia* 'First Blush' exhibits variegated foliage with pale green centers and cream-white margins with slightly crinkled edges.
- 10 3. *Euphorbia* 'First Blush' exhibits whorls of variegated pale green and cream-white bracts.
4. The edges of the upper foliage on *Euphorbia* 'First Blush' turn rose-pink in spring and deepen in color to rose-red in fall.
- 15 5. *Euphorbia* 'First Blush' exhibits low vigor and is less invasive than the species.
6. *Euphorbia* 'First Blush' is hardy to USDA Zone 4b.
7. *Euphorbia* 'First Blush' is winter dormant.
8. *Euphorbia* 'First Blush' exhibits yellow flowers in spring.

20

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The accompanying drawings illustrate the distinguishing traits of the new *Euphorbia* cultivar 'First Blush'. The drawings were made in spring and summer of plants grown out-of-doors in a cultivated area of Germantown, Wisconsin. The plants were in one-litre containers at the time. The drawing on sheet 1 illustrates the variegated foliage with rose-pink edges. The drawing on sheet 2 illustrates the plant in bloom. The drawings were made using conventional techniques and although flower and foliage colors may appear different from actual colors due to light reflectance, they are as accurate as possible by conventional photography.

BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANT

- The following is a detailed botanical description of the new *Euphorbia* cultivar 'First Blush'. Observations, measurements, values and comparisons were collected in Arroyo Grande California from plants grown out-of-doors in one-litre containers. Color determinations are made in accordance with the 2001 Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart from London England, except where general color terms of ordinary dictionary significance are used.
- 10 Botanical classification: *Euphorbia* 'First Blush'.
Species: *Epithymoides*.
Common name: Variegated cushion spurge.
Parentage: *Euphorbia* 'First Blush' is a sport of the following parent plant:
Parent parent: *Euphorbia epithymoides*.
- 15 Propagation method: Division and cuttings.
Rooting habit: Fibrous.
Time to develop roots: 2-3 weeks are needed for initial cuttings to develop roots.
Crop time: 8-12 months are needed to produce a one-litre container from a rooted cutting.
Growth habit: Compact, clumping habit.
- 20 Use: Ornamental shrub for rock gardens and perennial borders.
Type: Perennial.
Height of plant: 18 cm. in height in a one-litre container.
Width of plant: 27 cm. in width in a one-litre container.
Cultural requirements: Plant in well-draining soil and full sunlight with moderate water.
- 25 Needs filtered shade in hot climates.
Seasonal traits: Yellow flowering in spring and tinted foliage in spring and summer.
Other: When cut or bruised plant exudes a milky white latex that can be toxic and may elicit
dermal irritation.
- 30 Stem:

- Branching habit: Basal branching.
- Stem color: A combination of 138B and 61A.
- Stem shape: Cylindrical.
- Stem diameter: 3 mm. in diameter.
- 5 Stem length: 12 cm. in length.
- Stem surface: Heavily pubescent.
- Color of pubescence: 156D.
- Foliation:
- Type: Deciduous.
- 10 Leaf arrangement: Spiral.
- Internode dimensions: 5 mm. between nodes.
- Leaf division: Simple.
- Leaf shape: Oblong elliptic.
- Leaf length: 2 cm. in length.
- 15 Leaf width: 1 cm. in width.
- Leaf apex: Acute.
- Leaf base: Rounded.
- Leaf venation pattern: Visible mid-vein.
- Vein color: 138D.
- 20 Margin: Entire and revolute.
- Leaf surface (abaxial surface): Pubescent.
- Leaf surface (adaxial surface): Pubescent.
- Leaf texture: Slightly crisped.
- Leaf attachment: Petiole.
- 25 Petiole dimensions: 2.50 cm. in length and 1.25 mm. in width.
- Petiole color: 138B.
- Leaf color in spring (adaxial and abaxial surface): Centers are N138D and margins are 158B with edges tinted 63C.
- Leaf color in fall (adaxial and abaxial surface): Centers are N138D and margins are 158B with edges tinted 58A.

Bract color: Center is N138D, margin is 158C and edge is 67A.
Number of bracts: Approximately 17 in number.
Bract arrangement: Whorled.
Fused or unfused: Unfused.
5 Bract dimensions: Range in size from 1.50 mm. in length to 6 mm. in length and 1.25 mm. in width to 5 mm. in width.

Flower:

Petals: Apetalous.
Sepals: Asepalous.
10 Inflorescence: Cyathium.
Flowering season: Spring.
Fragrance: Absent.
Peduncle color: 138B.
Shape of floral leaves: Oblong elliptic.
15 Color of floral leaves: 11A.

Reproductive organs:

Stamen: One in number.
Stamen form: Jointed filament.
Styles: Three in number.
20 Stigmas: Bifid.

Seed:

Seed production has not been observed.

25

30